

THE PANEL'S ADVICE

NATIONAL CAPITAL DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Block 9 Section 132 Casey – First Session
Sky Terrace



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| Date issued: | 5 July 2022 | |
| Project: | Sky Terrace | |
| Review date: | Wednesday 22 June 2022 | |
| Meeting location: | Meeting held online via Microsoft Teams | |
| Site visit: | Site visit not held due to COVID-19 social distancing guidance | |
| Panel members: | Catherine Townsend, Chair and ACT Government Architect | Stuart Mackenzie |
| | Emili Fox | Philip Vivian |
| Proponent: | Worth Street Pty Ltd | |
| Observers: | Representatives from: Environment Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) | |
| Conflicts of interest: | None | |
| Confidentiality of the Panel's Advice: | <p>Design review considers concept proposals at various stages throughout the design process that are frequently subject to change and improvement in relation to feedback from the NCDRP. Throughout this time a commercial in confidence status is maintained for proposals that engage with the NCDRP.</p> <p>In accordance with Section 139 of the Planning and Development Act (2007) (the Act), prescribed development proposals are required to provide a copy of the 'Panels Advice' and the proponent's 'Response to the Panels Advice' in writing when the Development Application is submitted. Section 30 of the Act identifies the design advice and the proponent's written response to that advice as associated documents, therefore the most recent Panel's Advice and the proponent's response become publicly available once a Development Application is publicly notified for community comment.</p> | |

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MEETING SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Property address

Bentley Place, Casey (Block 9 Section 132 Casey)

Proposal

The proposal for 'Sky Terrace' is located at Bentley Place, Casey, formally identified as Block 9 Section 132 Casey. The subject site has a total area of 5478m² and is zoned CZ1: Commercial Core Zone. The site is irregularly shaped, with the primary area forming a triangular shape with a 'dogleg' located to the west providing access from the existing Bentley Place. The site features a significant fall from NW to SE of approximately two standard floor levels.

The site is situated within the Casey Group Centre, comprised of the Casey Market Town shopping centre and surface carparking. The site is situated in the south-east of the group centre area and immediately abuts the existing surface carpark of approximately 420 spaces along the site's north-western boundary. There is a landscaped stormwater retention pond 'Casey Pond' to the east of the site and a public open space area to the south featuring extensive grassed area, mature trees and an existing cycleway.

The proposal, 'Sky Terrace' is for a mixed-use development comprised of 212 dwellings, 1370m² of ground floor retail space and 362 carparks across upper and lower ground and two basement levels. Sky Terrace is proposed to feature ground floor retail tenancies fronting the existing surface carpark (i.e. Block 10, Section 132 Casey), at-grade entry opportunities at the Casey Pond frontage, extensive integration of solar on/within the roof, façade cladding and lower level canopy elements. Access to dwellings is proposed via exterior walkways within the central atrium, connected by a central 'sky bridge' that bisects the proposed atrium. The atrium is designed to include landscaped areas and residential amenities, as well as screened services and waste access.

Proponents' representative address to the Panel

The proponent, represented by Chris Millman of Cox Architecture, commenced the presentation noting the intention to lodge the Development Application (DA) by the end of 2022. The proponent described their prior involvement in the development of the Casey Group Centre to-date, noting they were the design-lead for the Casey Market Town development. The current proposal was described as forming an important contribution to the development of the overall Group Centre. The proponent presented their sketch master plan for the centre encompassing the remaining sites to be developed over time, with the proponent anticipating the existing surface carparks and petrol station sites for redevelopment.

The site context was explained in detail, including the irregular triangular shape of the site, the adjacent surface carpark to the northwest, public open space to the south and Casey Pond to the east. A significant crossfall from west to east of approximately two standard floor levels was also identified. A series of aerial and ground level images were presented to further illustrate the site context.

The design proposition was then presented, with the proponent describing the development of the site massing that has resulted in a 'doughnut' response (i.e. built form conforming to the site boundaries with central atrium) with openings at the ends of each mass to provide natural ventilation. Diagrams were presented to illustrate the retail spaces and locations, including those

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adjacent the existing surface carpark and further adaptable commercial spaces along the Casey Pond frontage.

A series of perspective renders, described as showing a well-developed preliminary massing, were presented. The proponent described the concealed manner of proposed services, with these to be located internal to the street frontage and screened from residents. Vehicle and service access to the site is proposed via a 'neck' driveway/basement ramp in site's south west from the existing Bentley Place. The proponent described the residential component, noting the open atrium model employed and the opportunities for open walkways, as well as screened courtyards for each dwelling entry. All units are proposed to be connected to a central core via external walkways and sky bridges that traverse the atrium. The upper levels of the proposal are anticipated to include the double level 'sky terrace' penthouses. The dwelling composition in terms of yield was presented (6% Adaptable 2 Bed+, 6% 1 Bed, 66% 2 Bed+, 9% 3 Bed+, 9% 3 Bed Sky Terrace, 5% 4 Bed Sky Terrace for total of 212 dwellings and 1370m² retail) as were indicative solar and natural ventilation diagrams. The proponent highlighted the proposed extensive use of solar panels as a key component of the sustainability strategy, with these to be located on the roof, within the façade system and within the lower-level canopy structure. The landscape design was also presented, with this focusing on edges and the internal landscaped podium that will feature a tiered arrangement of spaces. The unit typologies were briefly presented, as was the previous scheme for the site (i.e. a 48 storey tower).

Recommendation

Based on the documentation provided prior to the design review session and the proponents presentation, the following comments and recommendations are provided:

The Panel is pleased that the development proposal has been presented to NCDRP at this early design concept stage. Engaging early with the Panel has provided the opportunity for a meaningful discussion about the key elements of the proposal and to identify how the design concepts could be further enhanced for the benefit of the proponent, future residents and the broader community.

The proposal for a high density mixed use development in this location is supported by the Panel, noting the potential to achieve good amenity for residents and to provide additional vitality and activity to the Case Group Centre. Acknowledging the potential benefits, the Panel however considers that further design development is required to provide a robust justification for the proposal's density and height, including further development of the internal atrium, vehicle and servicing access arrangements and a sustainability strategy.

The proponent is encouraged to enhance residential amenity through consideration and refinement of visual and acoustic privacy, increased diversity of dwelling types, inclusion of resident-operable external shading and a revised landscape proposition that includes ample deep soil zones to support a healthy and enduring internal landscape offering.

The Panel thanks the proponent for their positive engagement with the design review process and recommends that the proposal return for further design review.

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Key Issues and Recommendations

The *Key Issues and Recommendations* provide detail advice to the proponent, consistent with the above recommendation.

To achieve the best possible design outcome for the proposal, the proponent is encouraged to consider the following issues through the next stages of the design development:

1.0 Context and character

- 1.1 The Panel considers that some increase in height could be supportable in this location (e.g. 4 to 8 storeys), given the site conditions and location within the existing Casey Group Centre, however caveats that any such proposal must demonstrate design excellence and clear public benefit that is not yet evident in the current design proposition. To provide a compelling case for the proposal, the Panel encourages the proponent to refine the design proposition to achieve exemplar quality residential amenity, thorough integration with the Casey Group Centre (i.e. current and future context), through proportionate increase in affordable unit yield and best practice sustainable development in both construction and operation. In assisting the proponent in determining a suitable height for the site, the Panel observes that there are a number of scale-dependant design thresholds including fire safety measures (e.g. sprinkler requirements) that could inform height considerations.
- 1.2 It is observed by the Panel that the significant upscaling of height when compared to the existing built form in the centre should be made as part of an integrated urban design and development plan for the whole precinct, taking into account the planning framework, a wide range of public infrastructure contributions and community benefits, as well as land use, movement networks and landscape considerations. The Panel notes its in-principle support for a proposal of increased density and scale on this site is conditional that it forms a component of a comprehensive, high quality urban design strategy for the Casey Group Centre. Such an urban design strategy should demonstrate generous contributions to public domain including high quality landscape with canopy trees.
- 1.3 The Panel is concerned that the proposal is yet to demonstrate an appropriate contextual response particularly the interface on the eastern boundary with the existing Casey Pond that presents a sheer wall of development of 11 storeys. This boundary condition is considered out of scale with the small pond, creating a tight landscape corridor for public access and potentially impinging on the public experience of community landscape spaces. The Panel considers that the monolithic bulk of the slab apartment form (with flat uniform-height parapets) may be improved by graduated height planes (e.g. 4 storeys at the pond, 6 storeys to the south, and 8 storeys on the western edge that may adjoin a denser village core in the future).

2.0 Landscape

- 2.1 The Panel notes that the proposal as presented has not demonstrated a positive contribution to the ACT Government's aspirations for tree canopy and permeable surfaces in response to the potential for urban heat and anticipated climate change risks. The Panel is generally not supportive of proposals that do not address their social and environmental responsibility to provide canopy cover and therefore seeks clarity and certainty about the proponent's intentions in this regard and encourages further incorporation of meaningful landscape within the site area (e.g. green roofs, use of permeable materials, deep soil zones).
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3.0 Sustainability

- 3.1 The Panel commends the proponent's intention to provide extensive solar integration (i.e. roof, façade system, canopy) and recommends that these be retained through design development and construction. The Panel requests that further details of the solar integration be provided as part of a comprehensive sustainability strategy for the proposal.
- 3.2 The early stage of the design is acknowledged however the Panel highlights the need to ensure a climate-responsive design including adequate solar control for the extensive east and west-facing facades. The proponent is encouraged to incorporate operable external shading to ensure the thermal comfort of residents and improve energy efficiency of the proposal.

4.0 Built form and scale

- 4.1 Acknowledging the early stage of design development, the Panel commends the proponent for the clear expression of a base, middle and top and the modulation of long facades that provides a legible urban character to the proposal. The Panel encourages further development of the expression and material palette to provide a richness appropriate to the proposal's location within the Casey Group Centre and the broader context.
 - 4.2 While the proponent's intention to provide an efficient scheme that includes pleasant journeys to each dwelling entry is acknowledged, the Panel considers that the current arrangement including the central skybridge has served to compromise solar access to the atrium and has may give rise to overlooking issues. The proponent is encouraged to explore incorporation of multiple cores to allow for an open atrium and to allow a proportion of dwellings to achieve full depth. The Panel also observes that an alternative core arrangement may also facilitate improved landscaping within the atrium, including potential for connected deep soil zones to support an enduring landscape for the proposal.
 - 4.3 In relation to the central courtyard, the Panel is concerned that this presents as under-scaled relative to the vertical scale of the proposal. The Panel is also concerned that the space may not yield a high-quality, healthy landscape owing to the absence of demonstrated deep soil zones and low levels of solar access. In addition to the recommendation for a reconfiguration of the core(s) and external accessways (see 4.2) the Panel encourages the proponent to explore provision of deep soil zones within the courtyard that are connected to natural systems, as well as other means to increase solar access to this space to support residential amenity and a healthy landscape.
 - 4.4 The Panel considers that issues of potential visual and acoustic privacy to the second bedroom adjacent to the walkway have not yet been demonstrably resolved and encourages the proponent to refine the design to address these concerns.
 - 4.5 The proposed vehicle and service access arrangement is observed by the Panel to compromise the presented master plan vision that includes a curved road abutting the north-western site boundary, as the basement ramp and utilities (e.g. gas, water meters) occupy the proposed location of this future road. The Panel therefore encourages the proponent to explore incorporation of the vehicle access/basement ramp generally within the building footprint in a manner that enables the master plan vision.
 - 4.6 The Panel found the design expression as presented lacks richness in materiality and detail. The early stage of design development is acknowledged, with the Panel looking forward to further development of this aspect of the proposal as the design proposition progresses.
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5.0 Diversity and amenity

- 5.1 The Panel observes that the amenity and communal vibrancy potential of the proposal is compromised by the low relative diversity of dwelling sizes and types, with the proposal predominantly comprised of two bed units that are unlikely to support a diverse community of residents for the site. The proponent is therefore encouraged to incorporate a greater diversity of dwelling types and to distribute these throughout the proposal.
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Sample images from presentation

The following images have been extracted by the NCDRP Secretariat from the proponent's presentation to the Panel during the session. The images have been selected as an indicative sample of the proposal at the time of design review. It is noted that the provided images may not be representative of the proposal as lodged for development assessment.



Typical Floor Plan

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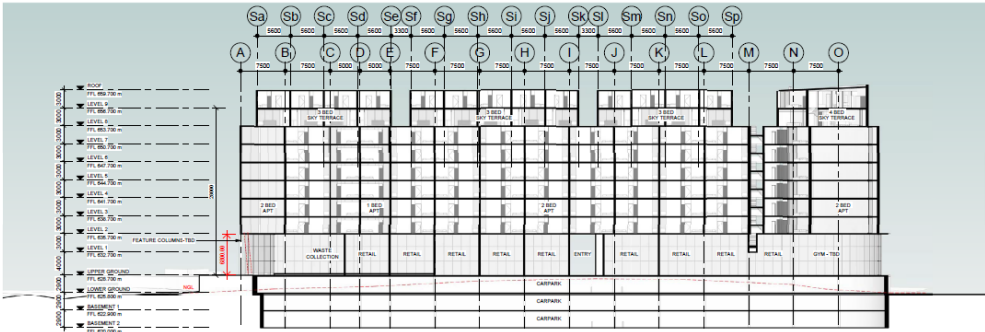


Landscape Plan (lower level adaptable commercial redacted by Secretariat)

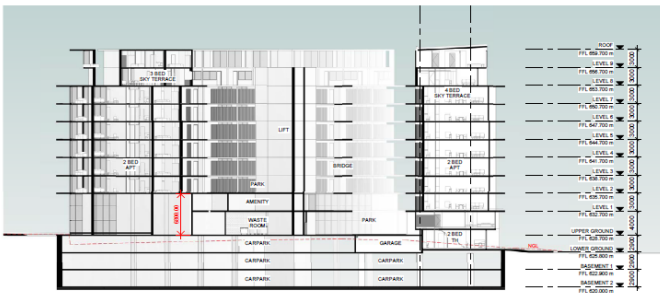


Perspective

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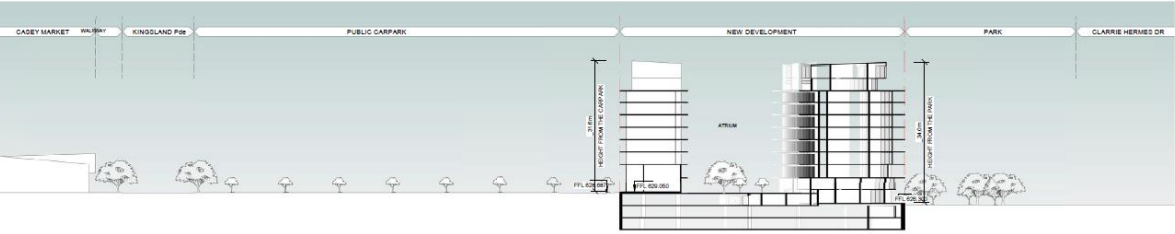


1 SECTION A
SCALE 1:500



2 SECTION B
SCALE 1:500

BLOCK 9 SECTION 132 CASEY - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL | 2022-06-22 | TYPICAL BASEMENT | COX



BLOCK 9 SECTION 132 CASEY - DESIGN REVIEW PANEL | 2022-06-22 | STREETSCAPE SECTION | COX

Elevations

